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In re Application of :
Carnevale :
Application No. 10/688,220 : DECISION ON PETITION
Filed: October 16, 2003 :
Attorney Docket No. ROC920030232US1 :

This is a decision on the petition under the unavoidable standard of 37 CFR 1.137(a), filed September 22, 2008 (certificate of mailing date September 17, 2008), to revive the above-identified application.

The petition is **DISMISSED.**

Any further petition to revive must be submitted within TWO (2) MONTHS from the mail date of this decision. Extensions of time under 37 CFR 1.136(a) are permitted. The reconsideration request should include a cover letter entitled "Renewed Petition under 37 CFR 1.137(a)." This is **not** a final agency action within the meaning of 5 U.S.C.§ 704.

The above-identified application became abandoned for failure to properly reply to the final Office action, mailed January 11, 2008. Petitioners filed an amendment after final on March 12, 2008 (certificate of mailing date March 11, 2008). The amendment after final failed to place the above-identified application in *prima facie* condition for allowance, as stated in the August 20, 2008 Advisory Action. The application became abandoned on April 12, 2008.

A grantable petition under 37 CFR 1.137(a) must be accompanied by: (1) the required reply, unless previously filed; (2) the petition fee as set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(l); (3) a showing to the satisfaction of the Director that the entire delay in filing the required reply from the due date for the reply until the filing of a grantable petition pursuant to 37 CFR 1.137(a) was unavoidable; and (4) any terminal disclaimer (and fee as set forth in 37 CFR 1.20(d)) required pursuant to 37 CFR 1.137(d).

The instant petition lacks item (3).

Decisions on reviving abandoned applications on the basis of "unavoidable" delay have adopted the reasonably prudent person standard in determining if the delay was unavoidable:

> The word 'unavoidable' . . . is applicable to ordinary human affairs, and requires no more or greater care or diligence than is generally used and observed by prudent and careful men in relation to their most important business. It permits them in the exercise of this care to rely upon the ordinary and trustworthy agencies of mail and telegraph, worthy and reliable employees, and such other means and instrumentalities as are usually employed in such important business. If unexpectedly, or through the unforeseen fault or imperfection of these agencies and instrumentalities, there occurs a failure, it may properly be said to be unavoidable, all other conditions of promptness in its rectification being present.

In re Mattullath, 38 App. D.C. 497, 514-15 (1912)(quoting Ex parte Pratt, 1887 Dec. Comm'r Pat. 31, 32-33 (1887)); see also Winkler v. Ladd, 221 F. Supp. 550, 552, 138 USPQ 666, 167-68 (D.D.C. 1963), aff'd, 143 USPQ 172 (D.C. Cir. 1963); Ex parte Henrich, 1913 Dec. Comm'r Pat. 139, 141 (1913). In addition, decisions on revival are made on a "case-by-case basis, taking all the facts and circumstances into account." Smith v. Mossinghoff, 671 F.2d 533, 538, 213 USPQ 977, 982 (D.C. Cir. 1982). Finally, a petition cannot be granted where a petitioner has failed to meet his or her burden of establishing that the delay was "unavoidable." Haines v. Quigg, 673 F. Supp. 314, 316-17, 5 USPQ2d 1130, 1131-32 (N.D. Ind. 1987).

In the instant case, petitioners have failed to provide adequate evidence that the delay was unavoidable.

Petitioners are reminded that after a final action, there are only five possible replies: (1) a Notice of Appeal, (2) the filing of a continuing application, (3) a 37 CFR 1.129(a) submission, if appropriate, (4) an amendment after final that makes the case ready for issuance or (4) an RCE. To be a proper reply, an amendment after final must eliminate all of the Examiner's objections and rejections, and thus place the case in *prima facie* condition for allowance.

Petitioners' amendment after final, filed March 12, 2008 (certificate of mailing date March 11, 2008), failed to eliminate all of the Examiner's rejections. The rules of practice are clear that prosecution of an application to save it from abandonment must include such complete and proper action as the condition of the case may require. The admission of an amendment not responsive to the last Office action, or refusal to admit the same, shall not operate to save the application from abandonment. "[T]he admission of, or refusal to admit, any amendment after final rejection, and any proceedings relative thereto, shall not operate to relieve the application or patent under reexamination from its condition as subject to appeal or to save the application from abandonment under § 1.135." See 37 CFR 1.116(a).

Petitioners' failure to appreciate that the filing of a proposed amendment under 37 CFR 1.116 on March 12, 2008 (certificate of mailing date March 11, 2008) did not relieve petitioners of the burden of timely filing a notice of appeal or other proper response to avoid abandonment of the above-identified application is unfortunate, but it is not unavoidable delay. The abandonment of

an application subject to a final Office action is not "unavoidable" within the meaning of 35 U.S.C. 133 and 37 CFR 1.137(a) in the situation in which the applicant simply permits the maximum extendable statutory period for reply to a final Office action to expire while awaiting a notice of allowance or other action. See Changes to Patent Practice and Procedure; Final Rule Notice, 62 Fed. Reg. At 53162, 1203 Off. Gaz. Pat. Office at 89 (response to comment 66).

Petitioners are reminded that an Advisory Action does not start a new period for response.. The application became abandoned because petitioners did not submit a proper reply to the final Office action.

The petition under 37 CFR 1.137(a) is dismissed.

The undersigned suggests that petitioners file a petition stating that the delay was unintentional. Public Law 97-247, § 3, 96 Stat. 317 (1982), which revised patent and trademark fees, amended 35 U.S.C. § 41(a)(7) to provide for the revival of an "unintentionally" abandoned application without a showing that the delay in prosecution or in late payment of the issue fee was "unavoidable." This amendment to 35 U.S.C. § 41(a)(7) has been implemented in 37 CFR 1.137(b).

The filing of a petition under 37 CFR 1.137(b) cannot be intentionally delayed and therefore must be filed promptly. A person seeking revival due to unintentional delay cannot make a statement that the delay was unintentional unless the entire delay, including the date it was discovered that the application was abandoned until the filing of the petition to revive under 37 CFR 1.137(b), was unintentional. A statement that the delay was unintentional is not appropriate if petitioners intentionally delayed the filing of a petition for revival under 37 CFR 1.137(b).

Further correspondence with respect to this matter should be addressed as follows:

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Telephone inquiries concerning this decision should be directed to the undersigned at (571) 272-3230.

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